



Forest Health Protection Pacific Southwest Region



Date: August 23, 2018

File Code: 3400

To: Patricia Grantham, Forest Supervisor, Klamath National Forest

Subject: Jess Plantations Project

At the request of Marissa Jones (Silviculturist) a site visit was made to the Jess Plantations Project area on May 31, 2018. Jess Plantations are within the original Jess Project (Figure 1) first visited on May 9, 2013 by Pete Angwin (FHP) and a report submitted (N13-02) detailing recommendations for controlling dwarf mistletoe in the Douglas-fir. The objectives of this visit were to assess the current insect and disease conditions in the pine plantations for possible FHP funding in FY19. Marissa Jones and Malia Ortiz (Klamath NF), Pete Angwin and Cynthia Snyder (FHP) attended.

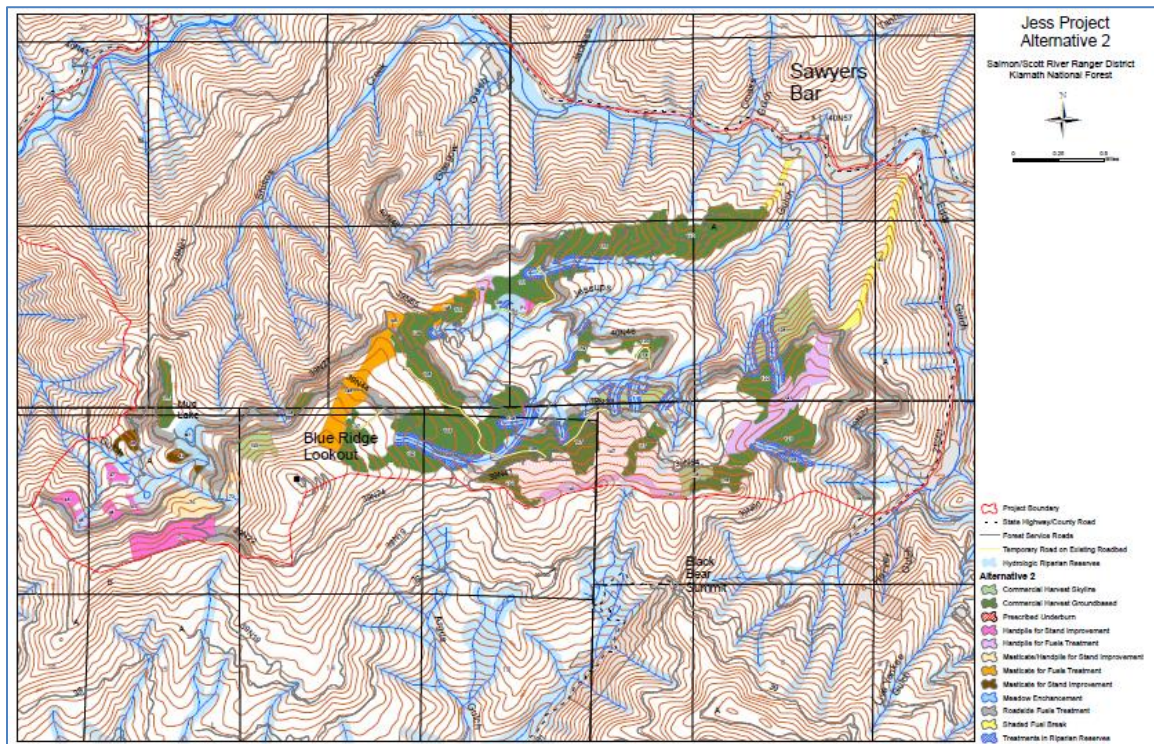


Figure 1. Jess Project area 2016 including the Jess Plantations 2019.

Background

The Jess Plantations Project area covers approximately 730 acres within Jessups Gulch, a tributary of the North Fork of the Salmon River, approximately 1¾ miles southwest of

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Sawyers Bar. The Plantations are covered by the Jess Project NEPA (August 16, 2016). The greater Jess Project was proposal to increase defensibility of Sawyers Bar, California against wildfire, to restore ecosystem processes, and to support rural economic health on approximately 8,535 acres in the North Fork of the Salmon River area under the Healthy Forests Restoration Act of 2003 (HFRA).

Past fire suppression and other past management activities have led to changes in vegetation species composition and stand structure. Current stand densities are such that tree growth and vigor are decreasing and the forest's susceptibility to insects and disease is increasing. Shade-intolerant species, including hardwoods and pines, are no longer successfully regenerating due to the encroachment of white fir and Douglas-fir.

Observations

Jess Project was initiated to address dwarf mistletoe in the Douglas-fir and white fir leading to mortality in these tree species and blister rust is leading to mortality sugar pine. These conditions, in addition to the extended drought, slow the growth of mid-seral stands and contribute to the death of large, older trees. The visit to the pine plantations was in response to western pine beetle attacks in ponderosa pine. The stand visited was a 60 year old pine plantation with basal area in excess of 200 square feet per acre. Western pine beetle had been active for 1-5 years as exhibited by large pockets of mortality, 20-30 trees, of varying degrees of decomposition (Figure2).



Figure 2. Ponderosa pine with a history of western pine beetle attack.

Aerial survey in 2017 did not show new tree mortality due to western pine beetle within the project area. However, there was widely scattered mortality throughout the Jess Project detected in 2016, and a very large polygon, about 400 acres, with mortality of about 8 trees per acre due to western pine beetle within the project area.

Discussion

The area is at risk of western pine beetle-caused mortality in ponderosa pine due primarily to overstocking and drought. As with most bark beetles, the most economical and efficient means of management is to maintain trees and stands in a healthy condition. Stocking reduction and creation of diverse stand conditions reduce overall susceptibility to western pine beetle. Thinning was discussed and it was suggested that treatment should bring the SDI down to a level where it would remain below 200 for a minimum of 20 years to meet the Region requirement of no less than 20 year re-entry for thinning.

If you have any questions regarding this report and/or need additional information, please contact Cynthia Snyder at 530-226-2437 or Pete Angwin at 530-226-2436.

/s/ Cynthia Snyder

CC: Marissa Jones, Ben Haupt, Chris Losi, Sheri Smith, Phil Cannon, Sherry Hazlehurst, Chris Fischer, and Pete Angwin